Delay in Naval projects

878. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to media report captioned "Navy hit by delay of big-ticket projects";

(b) if so, what are the reasons that a number of crucial projects worth over Rs. 15,000 crores by Indian Navy are running way behind schedule; and

(c) what are the details of various projects under the Navy which are running behind schedule and steps being taken by Government to complete these projects early?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) The projects named in the media report are the stealth frigate project (P-17) and destroyer (P-15A) project with Mazagon Docks Ltd. (MDL), Mumbai. Both these projects are under execution to meet the delivery dates of 2008-2009 and 2010-2012 respectively as per the delivery schedules.

The construction of six Scorpene submarines at MDL slated for delivery between 2012—2017 is expected to be completed as per schedule.

The construction of Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) is progressing with the scheduled "launch" of the ship in 2010 at Cochin Shipyard Ltd. (CSL). However, the final delivery of the ship may be delayed from the earlier likely delivery in 2012. Adequate funds are provided to CSL for the project. The project is reviewed at various levels for early completion.

The overall progress of repair and re-equipping of the ship, ex-Admiral Gorshkov, in Russia is slow. The Russian side has submitted a revised Master Schedule indicating a delay in the project. The Russian side has attributed the delays to "Growth of Work". Issues relating to the slow progress are taken up between the two countries at appropriate level.

Crash of trainee aircraft near Hyderabad

879. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRA SEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a trainee aircraft of the IAF crashed near Hyderabad in the early hours of 11th September, 2007;

(b) if so, the loss caused thereby to the IAF both in terms of its personnel and the aircraft; and

(c) whether any civilians were also killed in the accident and the loss of civil property if any, causes thereby and compensation paid by Government therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Besides the loss of the aircraft, two aircrew were also killed in the accident.

(c) No, Sir.

Organisational structure and staffing policy in BRO

880. MS. MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the organisational structure and staffing policy in Border Road Organisation (BRO);

(b) whether it is a fact that personnel at the subordinate levels are not given service conditions, facilities and allowances similar to their equivalent in armed forces;

(c) whether Government has received demands from the staff and the employees seeking similar service conditions, facilities and allowance;

(d) whether Government is considering to give service conditions, facilities and allowances to junior officers and subordinate staff of BRO similar to their equivalent in armed forces; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Border Roads Organization (BRO) was raised in 1960 for economic and strategic development of North and North Eastern border areas of the country. It is maintained by the Government of India to meet the operational requirements of the Army. BRO comprises of General Reserve Engineering Force (GREF) employees directly recruited, deputed from Central/State Government Departments and personnel from the Armed Forces on Extra Regimental Employment (ERE) of Army Officers. The Director General Border Roads (DGBR) is the head of BRO who exercises adminisitrative, financial and technical powers.

(b) As per existing regulations, services officers and personnel are governed by the terms and conditions of service applicable to them in Defence Services while GREF personnel are governed by Civil Service Regulations. However, some benefits as available to Defence Personnel, like Siachen Allowance, High Altitude Allowance, Ration, CSD canteen facilities, concession in air/rail fare, free uniform/uniform allowance, free accommodation etc. are also extended to GREF personnel.

(c) All matters pertaining to service conditions of GREF personnel of BRO including demands relating to service conditions, facilities and allowances are duly considered as and when any such demand is received.

(d) and (e) GREF personnel are governed by Central Civil Service Regulations and their pay and allowances are regulated according to the rules. As already mentioned in reply to Part (b), certain additional benefits as available to Army personnel are also given to GREF personnel.

Preparations for making Indian soldiers hi-tech

†881. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any preparations are being made to hi-tech Indian soldiers;

(b) if so, the efforts being made in this regard; and

(c) the time-frame fixed by DRDO to achieve this target?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has evolved the preliminary report on "Soldier as a System" and is in the process of discussion with the Army, as a collaborative programme.

(c) It may take about four years time after the project is santioned.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.